

Ancient lands, new debate

NEWS JOURNAL 7/7/98



The News Journal/GARY EMEIGH

Joelle Browning of Newark gently scrapes away dirt in search of artifacts at the Hickory Bluff excavation site in Dover. The 5-acre site near the Delaware Department of Transportation office has yielded 50,000 American Indian artifacts since the dig began in December.

Indian leader questions dig at Hickory Bluff in Dover

By J.L. MILLER
Dover Bureau reporter

DOVER — For archaeologists, Hickory Bluff is an exciting find that has yielded thousands of artifacts and tantalizing glimpses into the lives of some of Delaware's earliest inhabitants.

For visitors, this piece of high ground on the east bank of the St. Jones River is a chance to see what is left of an ancient American Indian campsite before it is paved over forever.

But for Charles C. Clark IV, assistant chief of the Nanti-

coke Indians, it's a little like having uninvited guests rummaging through the attic of his ancestral home.

The December discovery of the Hickory Bluff site by state Department of Transportation archaeologists has put a spotlight on the First State's first residents amid a growing national debate over cultural sensitivity and historical preservation.

In Nashville, Tenn., for example, plans by Wal-Mart and Lowe's to build a shopping center atop an Indian burial ground prompted the Ameri-

See DIG - A10



Archaeologists work on a large area at Hickory Bluff, believed to have been an Indian campsite thousands of years ago.

Dig: Site has yielded thousands of artifacts

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can Indian Movement to call a nationwide boycott of the stores. Protesters lost a legal battle to halt removal of the remains.

In Kennewick, Wash., archaeologists and Indian tribes have clashed over an 8,400-year-old skeleton — one of the oldest found in America — that scientists want to study. The tribes want the skeleton reburied, and the battle is being played out in court.

And in Delaware, the Island Field Museum at South Bowers was closed in 1991 after protests from Indians who were offended by the display of the excavated skeletal remains of their distant kinsfolk. The bones were reburied.

That is not the case at Hickory Bluff, where neither human remains nor items of ceremonial significance have been found. Archaeologists at Hickory Bluff say its use as a campsite, rather than a permanent village, makes such a find highly unlikely.

But the more than 50,000 artifacts that have been unearthed — pieces of clay pots, stone tools and the remnants of everyday life — are nonetheless significant. The sheer number of artifacts, coupled with the fact that they remained untouched over the centuries — the land has never been tilled — makes this find almost unprecedented.

The archaeologists view the artifacts as the pieces of a larger puzzle that, when completed, will present a detailed look at the hunter-gatherers who roamed the Delmarva Peninsula from 1,000 to 5,000 years ago.

They already know some of the stone tools are made from "exotic materials" — stone that is not found in Delaware and might have come from as far away as Ohio.

The fragments of carbonized wood found beneath the earth might be the remains of a temporary dwelling, while the fire-cracked rocks were part of hearths.

"It's one of the best sites I've ever excavated," said Michael D. Petraglia, who is supervising the excavation for Parsons Engineering Science Inc. of Fairfax, Va.

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About 20 people have been working full time since December at the 5-acre site, and the cost is expected to total \$500,000 before the dig is completed at the end of August. The cost is budgeted as part of the total \$32.5 million highway construction project.

According to DelDOT archaeologist Kevin Cunningham, Hickory Bluff was occupied over several thousand years, probably because of its ideal location for a people who were not farmers.

The tidal St. Jones River would have provided a rich harvest of fish and game, while the nearby Punchon Run was a source of fresh water for drinking.

"They are hunters and gatherers, very mobile, moving around a lot," Cunningham said. "Though there are a lot of house pits and fire-cracked rocks ... it's just small little groups that are there at any one time."

Pottery shards recovered at the site speak volumes to archaeologists, who can trace the evolving technology that produced such pottery styles as Marcey Creek, which the Indians used between 1200 B.C. and 800 B.C.

Archaeologist John "J.R." Rutherford's eyes sparkled last week as he cradled a piece of a soapstone bowl in his hands. The soft stone, so easy to carve — and not found in Delaware — still retains its slightly greasy feel.

"Finding a bowl fragment is really neat," Rutherford said. He said the stone artifacts eventually will be analyzed by mineralogists who sometimes can pinpoint the exact quarry where the stone originated.

An even more mind-boggling technological weapon in the archaeologists' arsenal is the ability to perform a chemical analysis of the stone tools.

"They can extract protein and animal fats off that," and even determine that a sharp-edged piece of stone was used to skin an opossum for someone's meal thousands of years ago, Cunningham said.

"That's what's really going to be of interest ... to breathe life into how the people lived," he said.

The site where the artifacts have been recovered will be paved over to become part of the Punchon Run Connector, which in 2001 will link Del. 1 with U.S. 13. Part of Hickory Bluff, however, will be preserved, and a drainage pond planned for the land has been relocated.

DelDOT, which discovered the site as road work began late last year, and the archaeologists have gone to greater lengths than usual to involve the public in the dig. Visitors are welcome, tours are offered and laymen even can take part in the dig. Many of the artifacts will

Hickory Bluff archaeological site

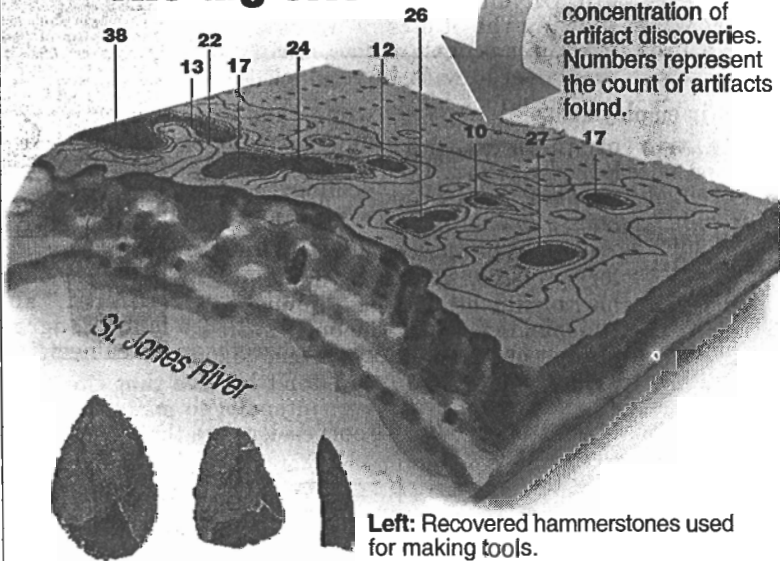
DelDOT archaeologists are uncovering houses, food pits, stone tools and pottery from prehistoric times.



It is believed that American Indians along the St. Jones River lived in "pit houses" similar to those pictured above.



The dig site



The map below shows the areas of heaviest concentration of artifact discoveries. Numbers represent the count of artifacts found.

Left: Recovered hammerstones used for making tools.

Source: DelDOT

The News Journal/LESLIE UDRY

be available for public display, and a report on the dig will be written and posted on the Internet.

As part of that outreach effort, Nanticokes and others of Indian heritage are particularly welcome to visit the site and take part in the dig.

The archaeologists all say it is impossible to determine the cultural identity of the people who camped at Hickory Bluff so many years ago, and it would be difficult to link them to today's Nanticoke Indians. Cunningham did say, however, the Hickory Bluff people "seem to be the indigenous folks."

"There are groups in New Jersey who are claiming descent from these people," Petraglia said. "The Lenape of Oklahoma also are claiming that. That is a great debate."

Clark, who also goes by his Nanticoke name of Little Owl, said DelDOT's offer of outreach is encouraging. But while he has nothing against archaeologists,

there's something about the excavation of the Indians' ancestral lands that puts him ill at ease.

"How happy would [white people] be if a bunch of Indians happened upon a settlement that they could trace their ancestry to, if it was us" digging up the fragments of their lives, Clark asked.

"It's just unfortunate that the approach to understanding us was to first destroy us, vanquish us, then sift through our bones and the daily tools that were left behind," Clark said.

Clark said he welcomes the additional light the Hickory Bluff excavation might shed on the lives of Delaware's early inhabitants, but questioned how much more can be learned — and perhaps, how much more should be learned.

"How much more information is being heaped onto the pile?" Clark asked. "Is the information worth the desecration of sacred grounds, or of a previous people's lives? You shouldn't have a blank check to research, if we're going to retain our humanity."

The archaeologists involved in the project say because the site has no apparent ceremonial significance and will be destroyed by highway construction in any event, it would be pointless not to examine what has been uncovered.

Clark said he realizes the Nanticokes lack the political muscle to force the relocation of the highway, or even to have much say in the disposition of the artifacts. He said he would settle for "a more sensitive approach" and the opportunity to "incorporate our thoughts" into future excavations.

As more of Delaware is paved and developed, "there's going to be more of these situations pop up," Clark said.

Museums and collectors have become more sensitive to the cultural issues involved in archaeology, partly through the efforts of Indian tribes and partly through recent federal laws that protect Indian burial sites and items of great cultural importance.

Museums have been forced to turn over long-held relics to the descendants of their rightful owners, and many Indian bones have been turned over to tribes for proper burial.

Private collectors also have turned over important relics, some through the efforts of the American Indian Ritual Object Repatriation Foundation. Collectors can donate items to the foundation; the foundation turns the items over to the proper tribe or clan.

Elizabeth Sackler, founder and president of the New York-based foundation, said the items being unearthed at Hickory Bluff wouldn't fall under the protection of the federal laws that govern human remains and items of overwhelming cultural significance.

However, "To some sovereign [Indian] nations, all items are cultural patrimony because all items belong to the culture," Sackler said.

It is important that archaeological digs be coordinated with local Indians, Sackler said — both out of respect for the culture and because an Indian might recognize an object that neither an archaeologist nor an anthropologist could identify.

While the precise cultural identity of the people who camped at Hickory Bluff might never be known, Clark still feels a connection to those early people — and a responsibility to them.

"As the sole surviving Native American group [in Delaware], even if this were to be a village that was not of a Nanticoke people, it still is incumbent upon us to protect it, because there is no one left to speak for those people," he said.

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News Journal claims Indian controversy when none exists

Charles C. Clark IV wonders how far The News Journal will go for a news angle. Will it go, say, to the point of manufacturing controversy?

Clark's question stems from a July 7 article and a July 9 editorial about the excavation of an American Indian campsite on the St. Jones River in Dover.

In the news article, Clark was quoted as questioning the propriety of the dig. That comment provided the news peg for the whole article. As the headline put it: "Ancient lands, new debate: Indian leader questions dig at Hickory Bluff in Dover."

The reader gets the impression Clark is against the dig, that his complaint is an active protest.

Public Editor



John Sweeney

The only trouble is Clark didn't offer his opinion. The News Journal asked for it.

A subsequent editorial criticized Clark, by name, for opposing the archaeological dig.

The only trouble is Clark didn't oppose the dig. Nor did the original article quote him

as opposing it.

Clark is assistant chief of the Nanticoke Indians and an outspoken defender of his people's culture. He said that both he and members of his tribal council knew about the dig since last year. But none of them had spoken publicly about it, nor did they plan to.

Until The News Journal called, that is. The newspaper was reporting the story about the Indian village and the reporter wanted to know what Indians thought of the venture.

Clark was quoted as welcoming the dig at Hickory Bluff for whatever light it might shed on the lives of Indians who lived there perhaps a thousand years ago. But Clark also said that such digs left him uneasy because they intruded on the

The context of that remark runs deep. Clark and other Nanticoke Indians have long sought respect for their culture and history and they have fought desecration of their sacred burial grounds.

Yet there is a difference between someone feeling uneasy about events and someone openly critical of them. However, the article, its display and the headline, followed by the editorial, made it look as if Clark were actively opposing the Hickory Bluff dig.

Just a story

In other words, it looked as if we had a fight on our hands. But did we?

The reporter said he felt that the focus on the disagreement

made the account a better story. Obviously, so did the headline writer.

Yet consider what is really going on here.

Clark is uneasy about the whole idea of the digs, but he isn't actively opposed to them.

Clark fiercely opposes digs on land sacred to Indians, but no one, not Clark, not the scientists, says Hickory Bluff is sacred. So there are differences, but is there an argument?

No.

So why the headline and the play of the story, with the critical remark on page one and the context provided deep in the article in the back of the paper?

Clark was treated unfairly.

What we have here is an example of what the linguist Deborah Tannen calls "the argument culture." The press, among other institutions in our culture, tends to see things in terms of arguments. As Tannen puts it, "Any day you open a newspaper or magazine, you can find evidence of the belief that controversy is interesting and the absence of controversy is dull."

Our society has fights aplenty. Real fights. The News Journal doesn't need to manufacture any.

► John Sweeney is The News Journal public editor. Send e-mail to jsweeney@wilmingtongannett.com

Another insult added to Indians' ancient injuries

For more than a decade, The News Journal has occasionally contacted me to solicit my comments, insight and perspective on a variety of topics which touch upon my American Indian ancestry. I have accommodated the paper in every instance, believing

Rebuttal



Charles C. Clark IV

it to be my responsibility to bring the long-neglected voice of my people into pertinent public discourses. Being the tribal historian, spokesman and assistant chief of the Nanticoke Indian tribe, it's a responsibility I handle with due care.

I always felt The News Journal and I shared at least some degree of rapport and mutual respect. Imagine my surprise, then, when remarks which a News Journal reporter recently solicited from me were distorted, misrepresented and unfairly presented, and then used against me in a scathing editorial that ended in a personal attack on my credibility.

At issue are the July 7 front-page story "Ancient lands, new debate," and the July 9 editorial "Dig on St. Jones River treats Indian ground with all due respect." By and large, the July 7 article accurately reflected the interview that reporter J.L. Miller conducted with me weeks

ago about the archaeological dig of an ancient campsite near Dover. However, the thrust of my comments and my involvement in the story itself were skewed, and some contextual errors did surface.

The July 7 article's sub-headline, "Indian leader questions dig at Hickory Bluff in Dover," got the entire article off on a false start as it wrongly gives the impression that I initiated or inspired The News Journal interview in order to raise questions about the dig. Until The News Journal contacted me about the Hickory Bluff dig, neither I nor my people had made any comment about it, not in public nor in any conversations with the state. Miller contacted me posing questions about the site to elicit an Indian point of view, which is the only kind I could ever give him.

It was The News Journal that questioned the dig; I merely provided the answers they sought. I am sure my responses neither surprised nor disappointed them. How fair or accurate is it, then, for the July 9 editorial to characterize my responses as unwarranted criticisms aimed at making "an argument for argument's sake"?

Ambush journalism

This is ambush journalism, improper and unfair. Until this newspaper got involved, no argument ever existed: Delaware does whatever it wants with whatever Indian artifacts it finds, plain and simple. The state has never demonstrated the slightest sense of obligation in this regard toward its lone state-recognized Indian tribe. It has never sought the participation of my tribe in these affairs or shared its findings with us, something I and my people would like to see change.

No special invitation has ever been extended to the Nanticoke. We heard about the Hickory Bluff site the same way everyone else did, and we enjoy no greater access or involvement.

This undeniable truth flies in the face of an untruth that was wholly created and promulgated by this newspaper. The editorial board wrote, "The state Department of Transportation invited Nanticoke and other native Americans to visit and take part in the dig. It was a sensitive and appropriate gesture." Since no such invitation was ever extended by DelDOT to my tribe, surely the editorial board will agree with me that such an omission was, in fact, insensitive and inappropriate.

When I informed editorial page editor John Taylor of this gross inaccuracy, he replied that the information was included in the July 7 article and therefore wound up in the editorial. Not so. The article never states that DelDOT contacted the Nanticoke. It only mentions that DelDOT had gone to great lengths to "involve the public in the dig," and that "laymen can even take part in the dig." The article went on to say that as part of DelDOT's outreach efforts, "Nanticoke and others of Indian heritage are particularly welcome to visit the site and take part in the dig." This is an after-the-fact statement made to Mr. Miller — not to us — during his reporting.

No special invitation has ever been extended to the Nanticoke. We heard about the Hickory Bluff site the same way everyone else did, and we enjoy no greater access or involvement.

The editorial claims that "Mr. Clark questions the whole idea of archaeological exploration, particularly research on native American sites." I have no idea what this claim is based on — and frankly I am at a loss to understand why it was made — because it directly contradicts what I actually said in the original article. It states: "Clark said he welcomes the additional light the Hickory Bluff excavation might shed on the lives of Delaware's early inhabitants, but questioned how much more can be learned — and perhaps, how much more should be learned."

My position as stated in the article was obviously misrepresented

CONT. Next Page....

in the editorial to the point of extreme contradiction. And the words "how much more should be learned" were not mine at all.

The few relatively minor contextual errors in Miller's article do not warrant too much attention here as it would amount to mere nit-picking. However, there is one error that must be cleared up since the editorial board decided to run whole hog with it. When I posed the question of how white people would feel if Indians were digging up an early white settlement, I was again paraphrased in the article (a technique that often leads to journalistic disasters) and certain parts were omitted in the story.

Taken out of context

Proper context is vitally important to understanding what I said and meant, which was: Put the shoe on the other foot and then tell me how it feels. By way of offering a hypothetical example, I posed

the following question: How would the white descendants of an Indian massacre site feel if contemporary Indians were digging through their white ancestor's settlements. — claiming whatever personal

articles they happened to find as their own with complete and utter authority — and they had no voice whatsoever in the dig or disposition of any artifacts found? This was the closest analogy I could come up with at the time to convey what I meant when I said that for the descendants left standing behind on the sidelines, being excluded in such a dig "literally adds insult to injury," a quote that did not appear in the article.

It was never my intention to make this a racial issue, as the editorial comments imply. It already was one long before I was born; I simply inherited it.

Finally, the editorial characterized my tribe's protest of the exhibition of native human remains at the state's Island Field Museum as having merit, but stated that my criticisms of Hickory Bluff are nothing more than spurious arguments. "Mr. Clark has credibility," they write. "If he doesn't see the difference between the two situations, he'll lose it." Believe me, I know firsthand and far better than most the difference that exists between the two. It's just a shame that this newspaper omitted every quote I gave them addressing this difference, and that it choose to attack me without reason.

Graves and bones

The very first thing I discussed with Miller was the distinction between the discovery of native burial sites and village sites, and the consequent level of involvement that my people are allowed to have in both of them. I touched upon the 1988 state law that finally offered some legal protection against the desecration of our ancestors' bones, informing him that our authority begins and ends with those cases only. I cannot explain why that part of the interview was left out. But for a newspaper to omit something I discussed, and then publicly attack me because of its absence, is even harder to comprehend.

The editorial ran two days after the news article. I read the July 7 article late that night following our monthly tribal meeting. I'm sorry I didn't have time to file my objections the next day, but I was busy. Since April, I have had the responsibility of gathering up the discarded bones of my ancestors that were left behind on state property after grave robbers vandalized

their resting places. On the morning of July 8, I was meeting with state officials to address this horrific, soul-wrenching problem. We went out to the site (which will remain nameless as I do not want more heartless ghoul to follow) to survey the situation, which was only brought to their attention because of me.

Bone fragments litter the ground there. Depressions in the soil are all that are left of too many of my people's graves. I know what happened to some of the Nanticoke skeletons that were once there, and I pledge to recover each and every single one of them. I pledge to protect the ancestors that remain in that burial site, in another one nearby that has been similarly desecrated, and any others that may turn up, for as long as I have breath.

Yes, I see the difference between the two situations. I know what I am up against. And now you do, too.

► Charles C. "Little Owl" Clark IV is assistant chief of the Nanticoke Indian tribe



Joelle Browning, of Newark, scrapes away dirt at the Hickory Bluff excavation along the St. Jones River in Dover.

NEWS JOURNAL file

DIGGING DEEP

Students from Jenny Smith dig, sift their way 5,000 years deep into our history

SOMETIME around 3,000 B.C., prehistoric men and their Native American ancestors came to present day Dover and built their homes near the Jones River. They visited the area seasonally to take advantage of rich hunting and fishing resources.

This summer, students from Jenny Smith Elementary school dug and sifted their way through dirt to find the remains of those people who lived there almost 5,000 years ago.

"While we were screening," Ricky Quararone said excitedly, "I found a piece of charcoal." He added that the piece of charcoal meant the inhabitants of the area used fire.

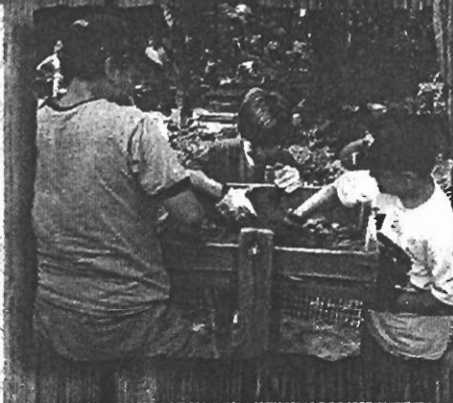
His classmate Alex Pearce said, "I found three pieces of pottery." Peter McCormick found what he identified as jasper flakes and Justin Hall said the group found fire cracked rocks which indicated that there was a fireplace in the area.

"The site was so rich that everyone found something," said Judy Austin, one of the teachers accompanying the group on the class trip and history lesson about the ice age.

The archeological site at Hickory Bluff located off of Route 113 just behind the DelDOT building has been under excavation since last November when DelDOT set out to prepare the area for construction.

The prehistoric site, first identified in 1994 during an archeological survey, lies in the proposed corridor for the Puncheon Run Connector road between Routes 1 and 113.

See DIG, 5 ►



Jenny Smith Elementary students Chris Fox and Mike Fluk (baseball cap) sifted through materials they found under the watchful eye of a site archeologist.

**Story and photos
by Staff Writer Laura Sankowich**

An archeologist help Fluk (baseball cap) and Justin Hall carefully probe the site for possible artifacts.



Students go on archeological dig

► DIG, from 1

Michael Petraglia, a cultural resources manager for Parson Engineering Science Inc., explained, "Before DelDOT begins a project they have the land surveyed and excavated to make sure nothing historic or prehistoric in importance is destroyed or lost."

The site is important because in addition to many prehistoric artifacts, a large number of pit houses have also been found. Pit houses are shallow holes, where people lived underneath bark and reed shelters.

"Phase III archeological investigations or an excavation is being performed on the site so that we can learn as much from it as possible before construction of the road begins," Petraglia said.

The children were allowed to dig at the site and remove artifacts for one hour. "I don't think many children this age have the opportunity to go on an actual archeological dig," said teacher Cathy Lyons.

Quararone said he learned that Indians had lived there and that there were post holes in the soil where primitive houses were. "We found something big," he said, "and we had to dig down a level."

Pearce interpreted that a level is 10 centimeters deep. He also said that the area where the Indians dumped their trash was called middens.

Diane Halsall, one of the archeologists who helped to coordinate the field trip, said she was impressed with the knowledge the

children possessed about archeology. "They were incredibly astute," she said. "They knew terms that kids I had out here who were 16 and 17 didn't know — like midden and flake." Halsall also said the children found pieces of artifacts and asked questions.

According to the archeologists, the entire site is over five acres in size, and appears to have been occupied by prehistoric people during the Woodland I period which had two main culture complexes: the Barker's Landing period 3,000 B.C. to 1,000 A.D. and Delmarva Adena, about 500 B.C. to 1 A.D. Occupation of this site was not confined to this period, and traces of both the earlier Archaic period, and the later Woodland II period have also been found.

FIRST

Things

Edited by Pat Koly

FIRST

DIG THIS

Wannabe archeologists can unearth pottery, stone tools and cooking implements at a major Native American campsite uncovered along the banks of the St. Jones River in Dover.

"The Hickory Bluff site is almost Pompeii-like in its preservation," says Dr. Michael Petraglia, excavation director.

Archeologists for the Delaware Department of Transportation uncovered the site, estimated to be 1,000 to 5,000 years old.

Carbon dating, plant studies and chemical analysis from decayed organic matter are among the techniques being used to understand Native American activities.

Interested individuals or groups are encouraged to tour the site and take part in the dig. To learn more, call 760-2129. — P.K.



1998 Report to the People

Delaware Department of Transportation

HICKORY BLUFF ARCHAEOLOGY SITE BREEDS NEW DISCOVERIES

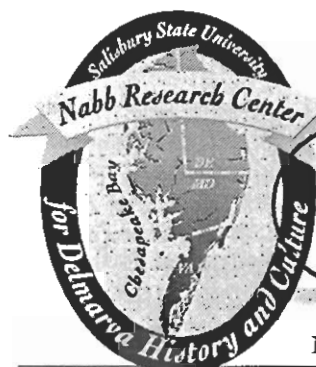
The Hickory Bluff prehistoric site is the location of the future Puncheon Run Connector, that will connect State Route 1 and US 13, relieving congestion on local roads. The site is situated along a protected bluff, close to a natural landing on the St. Jones River in Dover. Between 5,000 – 1,000 years ago, Native Americans camped along the river, an ideal location due to its richness in game and plant life. At the Hickory Bluff site, DelDOT archaeologists uncovered over 50,000 artifacts.

During the actual “dig,” the site was opened to visitors, including school children, clubs and individuals. All artifacts will be stored in state archives and all reports, analyses and field notes will be compiled into a book that will be available to the public. A website, featuring on-line reports, is in development.

Over the past twenty years, DelDOT has identified approximately 15,000 archaeological sites, such as Hickory Bluff.



“Backed by cultural preservation laws, DelDOT, over the past 20 years has supported hundreds of archaeological surveys that located and preserved or excavated thousands of prehistoric sites. Most sites are avoided or protected, while those facing imminent destruction are excavated.” Excerpt from, *Courting the Public: Well-planned PR Pays Off for Archeologists in Delaware*, appearing in the March/April issue of *Discovering Archaeology*.



Shoreline

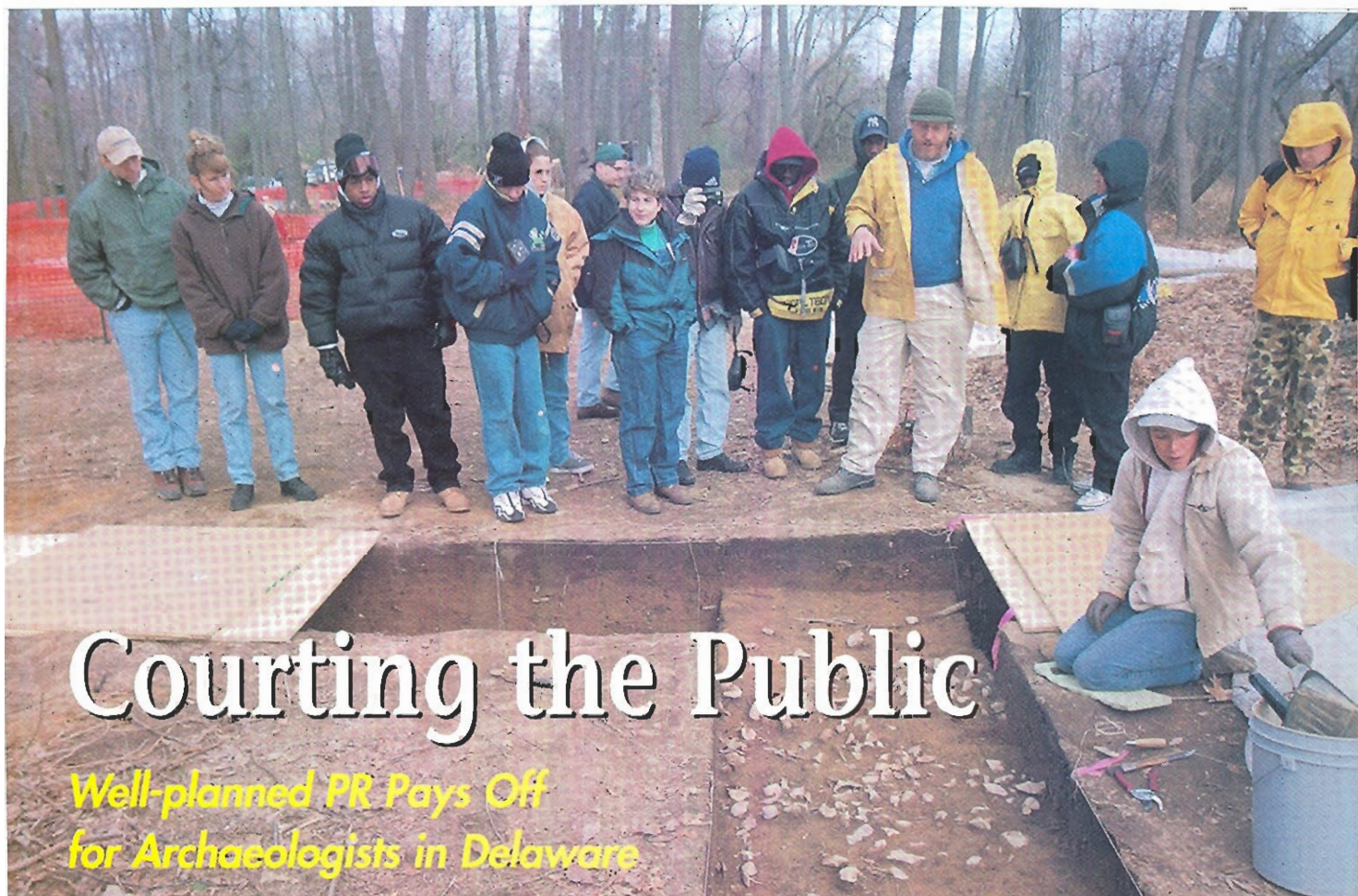
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Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury State University

Hallsall Conducts Childrens' Program

On Saturday, April 24, Diane Halsall of Parsons Engineering Science, Inc., in Fairfax, VA, presented a program geared to children under 12 concerning archaeology and Native American culture. Halsall was involved in the Hickory Bluff site at the St. Jones River in Dover, DE, a five-acre archaeological site occupied during the Woodland period (3,000 B.C.-A.D. 1,000). Halsall brought Native American artifacts such as spear points and arrowheads, as well as chipped stone tools and sherds of pottery. These could be examined by the children to help them create "artifacts" of their own. She also discussed the Nanticoke, whose name translates to mean "People of the Tidal Waters," who were prolific producers of wampum shell beads, made from the shellfish they depended upon for their diet.

According to Becky Miller's children, Emily and Austin, the morning was "great fun," and they learned a lot about Native Americans. The Nabb Research Center hopes to have Halsall repeat her program next year.



Courting the Public

*Well-planned PR Pays Off
for Archaeologists in Delaware*

by Kevin Cunningham, Diane Halsall, and Michael Petraglia

Archaeologist John Rutherford guides students through a tour of the Hickory Bluff excavation in Dover, as part of a carefully planned public relations campaign.

They came in trickles and streams to the Hickory Bluff dig in Dover, Delaware – school kids, Boy and Girl Scouts, parents, retirees, homemakers, politicians, reporters. They toured the pre-Columbian site, talked to archaeologists and even tried their hand at excavation.

Thousands of planned and unplanned visitors worked at least briefly during the 10-month project, and most went home as enthusiastic fans of the past and of our efforts to preserve it.

Archaeological sites contain information about our collective heritage as a people, community, and country. When people, young or old, understand this, they develop a sense of ownership and responsibility. By demonstrating that visitors/volun-

teers can be an important part of uncovering this heritage, archaeologists empower the public with an active interest in the past. Allowing them to excavate in a supervised, hands-on manner, and to offer their interpretations, solidifies this relationship. People come to care about the site.

Archaeologists working large sites and small around the world are discovering the value of public education – and old-fashioned public rela-

tions. In Delaware, we've elevated it to a carefully planned and integral part of our work.

Archaeology fascinates the public: People want to know what archaeologists are finding in their neighborhoods and who lived long ago on the place they call home.

Tapping into that fascination with a broad-based public outreach program can accomplish much more than just giving folks a nifty trip to an archaeological site. An informed

appreciation for the past among the public, the press and government officials can translate into greater support for the tax dollars that finance so much archaeological research in the United States.

Federal and state transportation agencies are the number-one sponsors of American archaeology. Throughout the country, these agencies routinely hire professionals to study planned roadways for cultural resources before bulldozers plow over the ancient evidence.

Delaware is no exception. Backed by cultural-preservation laws, the state Department of Transportation over the past 20 years has supported hundreds of archaeological surveys that located and preserved or excavated thousands of prehistoric sites. Most sites are avoided or protected, while those facing imminent destruction are excavated. Without such active official support, much of Delaware's past would disappear, as in some

other states, beneath roadways, shopping malls, and subdivisions.

Delaware, one of the smallest states, has witnessed some of the largest-scale excavations of prehistoric sites in the country. These wide-

Archaeologists working large sites and small around the world are discovering the value of public education – and old-fashioned public relations. In Delaware, we've elevated it to a carefully planned part of our work.

ranging excavations help us track the changing cultures through the course of prehistory, from mobile, hunter-gatherers to semi-sedentary groups that added cultivated crops to their diets.

Incorporating public education into these archaeological undertakings has been going on for years at

the Delaware Department of Transportation, and the media from the beginning have been of enormous help in spreading the word that the past is worth preserving.

For most people, archaeology means little more than the pyramids and mummies they see on television. Few Delaware residents are aware of the wealth of archaeological evidence in their state, and when they learn of it – on local radio or television, in newspapers or magazines – their interest is piqued.

The recent Hickory Bluff excavation is an example of the effort. Major excavations were performed for 10

months at the five-acre site on the east bank of the St. Jones River in the capital city of Dover. More than 100,000 artifacts were recovered and 300 cooking hearths, pits, and possible residences were excavated, with a probable age of about 6,000 years ago.

Building on local, regional and national models, we designed the successful public outreach campaign for the Hickory Bluff site to include three primary initiatives, each one feeding into and branching out from the others.

The first initiative involved dispatching archaeologists to speak at schools, scouting events, career fairs, senior centers, and Native American gatherings. These visits not only educated people about archaeology, but also advertised the site.

Then the public was invited to visit and even dig at the site, which was opened to the public daily. A desig-

A Delaware archaeologist plots the location of artifacts excavated at the Silo Pit at the Lums Pond pre-Columbian site. The dig, which dates to about 850 B.C., has been popular with the public.





Archaeologist Joelle Browning gives schoolchildren their first taste of archaeology at the Lums Pond site, where older students (bottom) also work at the excavation. Thousands of visitor/volunteers sampled the archaeological process as part of Delaware's popular outreach program.

nated greeter, equipped with an interactive site tour, was always present during visiting hours.

After a press release was distributed early in the public campaign, the site was continually visited by print and broadcast reporters who spread the word statewide.

For the third initiative, brochures, educational activities, bulletins, interactive learning tools, and other easily understood materials were developed for different age groups and interest levels. They were distributed at almost every forum imaginable.

At the Hickory Bluff site, visits by school and other groups, as well as unscheduled drop-ins, were a regular occurrence. A similar protocol was followed with all of them. A colorful, interactive display was erected close to the site entrance, giving visitors an obvious place to convene. Site orientations of 15 to 20 minutes were presented there by a designated archaeologist. Field archaeologists volunteered for this assignment and rotated the responsibility.

The display area included a representative sample of artifacts visitors might encounter. The artifacts were displayed in secured cases, with the designated archaeologist responsible

for keeping a continual eye on them.

An effective way to educate visitors to the importance of exercising great care at the site is to explain the nature of "context." Simple analogies help the uninitiated capture the meaning; for example, compare the locations of artifacts to evidence at a crime scene, such as footprints and a smoking gun. If the evidence was moved or hidden, the detectives will have a hard time figuring out what really happened.

A talk on safety was delivered at the end of the orientation so it would remain fresh in the minds of visitors, particularly young people. Visitors were instructed not to run, never to enter a unit unless invited by an archaeologist, and never to attempt to use a tool they had not been asked to use.

It is always important to explain why archaeologists do things the way they do; if people understand the rationale, they are more likely to remember the instructions.



After the orientation, visitors were given a site tour and then offered an opportunity to dig. They were matched with archaeologists, usually on a 4-to-2 ratio. Typically, one archaeologist would supervise the digging of two visitors, while two others, supervised by another archaeologist, would screen the excavated soil for artifacts.

Through resourceful coordination of activities and maintaining a careful

watch over visitors at all times, site damage was virtually nonexistent.

Now we are developing an interactive website for the public and profes-

for teachers and students.

In addition, as part of our outreach efforts, we are developing "Internet reports" – living docu-

goal is a resource that is understandable and useful to many people, including non-archaeologists.

The public is a largely untapped resource, and by including them in archaeological planning and projects, we are in effect contributing to conservation of the past. Public outreach in Delaware has paid both hidden and obvious dividends, from increasing public support for archaeology to instilling in young people an interest in their own cultural heritage.

In our increasingly technological society, where cultural and natural resources too often are being treated as afterthoughts, archaeology can be an invaluable link not only to the past, but to the environment of the future. □

KEVIN CUNNINGHAM is an archaeologist for the Delaware Department of Transportation; DIANE HALSALL and MICHAEL PETRAGLIA are with Parsons, an international environmental and cultural resource management firm.

The public is a largely untapped resource, and by including them in archaeological planning and projects, we are in effect contributing to conservation of the past.

sionals. The *Archaeology of Delaware* site pulls together 20 years of research, offering an overview of the state's prehistory and history, a listing of professional reports and publications, and lesson plans and materials

An aerial view shows the excavation in progress at Delaware's Lums Pond archaeological site.

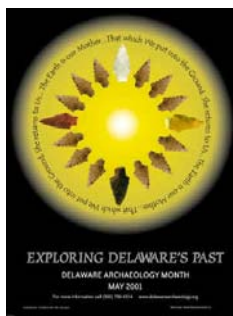
ments no longer tucked away in some obscure archive.

We plan to make the Hickory Bluff artifact catalog and site grid available to any on-line computer user. These users can analyze the data sets, display graphs, tables, maps, and photographs, and compare our artifact catalog to other site assemblages. The



Delaware Archaeology Month

Designing the 2001 Poster



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HOW WE DESIGNED IT

The 2001 Delaware Archaeology Month committee asked archaeologists from the Cultural Resource Department of Parsons Engineering Science to design the Delaware Archaeology Month poster. The committee recommended that the theme of the poster should center on the recent excavations conducted on Native American sites. A volunteer poster group was formed at Parsons to discuss this issue and to consider how best to portray this topic.

The past few years have witnessed an increased level of discussion between archaeologists and Native Americans on the national level and in the State of Delaware. Therefore, it was

reasoned that a poster which *combined* Native American and archaeological symbols and perspectives would be appropriate. Our poster committee thought that this integrated approach would be especially fitting since both groups have a deep appreciation and respect for the past. Additionally, this combined theme would symbolically recognize the need to continue the push for increased interactions and partnerships.

The design of the 2001 poster has been stimulated by our interactions with Native Americans and a broader reading of the anthropological and historic literature. This poster takes certain elements from these sources, and recombines them in an overall design. This poster is meant to accentuate positive aspects of learning about the past, enriching our communities with greater historic knowledge, and gaining a better appreciation for America's and Delaware's indigenous cultures.

The 2001 Delaware Archaeology Month poster therefore is designed in the spirit of cooperation, harmony and mutual understanding. We hope that members of the general public will enjoy the design and find some inspiration in it!

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Circle:

A number of elements in this poster—the artifacts, the quote, and the sun—are all purposefully chosen and deliberately set in a circular arrangement.

The circle is an ancient symbol that is frequently found in material culture and art work throughout the world. The circle motif often is used by Native American cultures and Eastern Algonquian tribes, appearing in sacred inscriptions, signs, and in ceremonial architecture. The concept of the circle often is used in oral teachings as a metaphor for explaining the universe, supernatural forces, life cycles, spiritual harmony, and community union.

A quote by Black Elk (1863-1950), holy man of the Oglala Sioux is particularly suitable in this context:

You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round.

Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nest in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were.

The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves.

Quote from *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*. By Nicholas Black Elk, as told through John G. Neihardt, 2000, page 150. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

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Color and Direction Symbolism:

The poster incorporates a number of colors—including white, yellow, black and red—which are commonly used by many Native American tribes today. The poster incorporates a direction to the colors, white to north, yellow to east, black to south, and red to the west, as well as a contrasting color format—yellow against black. The particular artifact colors and directions used in this poster were inspired and based on those used by the Nanticoke Indian tribe of Delaware.

Color is a powerful visual medium in past and present cultures. Color often is used by societies and individuals to convey both deliberate and hidden social and religious messages—whether in spiritual teachings, art, food, clothing, or bodily adornment. Color may have many meanings according to tribe and particular contexts, and it may be used to evoke emotional or physical meanings. For example, the color red may have meanings such as triumph, power, or life blood, whereas white may be taken as a sign for conveying serenity, light, winter, or snow.

Directionality and color are often intertwined and associated with one another, and can be symbolic of different deities, powers, and sacred locations. Across Native American societies of the eastern seaboard, the eastward direction and counter-clockwise right-side rotations are associated with life and light. Conversely the westward direction, clockwise and left rotations are sometimes associated with death. Hence major deities are thought to dwell in the west and souls of the deceased travel in that direction.

An underlying message of color as used in this poster is to recognize the diversity of human races, while promoting harmony, unity, and communication among all peoples.

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Cosmology, Cycle of Death and Rebirth:

Humans have always been fascinated with cosmos, or the order and harmony of the universe, to understand the complex interdependence of man and the natural world. Observation of the sky and the movement of the planets and stars is a common denominator in many Native American cultures, and it is often used to understand human experience.

The poster illustrates the duality of night and day through use of its black background and its sunburst patterns. The black is meant to convey darkness, symbolic of human ignorance, misunderstandings, and the need to find light. The sunburst is symbolic of rebirth,

regeneration, and the dawn of a new day. The white in the center of the sun may be taken as the center of all things, and the place where all natural and human realms can be taken as one. In this sense, the sunburst and its central core represents the need for both Native Americans and archaeologists to come together, find their paths, and work together to build common ground, as has been nicely described in these new books:

Swidler, N., K. Dongoske, R. Anyon, and A.S. Downer (editors)

1997 *Native Americans and Archaeologists: Stepping Stones to Common Ground*. Altamira Press, Walnut Creek.

Dongoske, K.E., M. Aldenderfer, and K. Doehner (editors)

2000 *Working Together: Native Americans and Archaeologists*. Society for American Archaeology, Washington D.C.

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Quote Attribution:

The quote used on the poster is attributed to Big Thunder, a Penobscot tribal Chief in the state of Maine. Chief Big Thunder is said to have remarked:

The Great Spirit is in all things, he is in the air we breathe.
The Great Spirit is our Father, but the Earth is our Mother.
She nourishes us, that which we put into the ground, she
returns to us.

Spoken by an eastern seaboard Algonquin Chief, this particular quote struck poster committee members as particularly relevant to those of us who excavate sites, recover artifacts and material remains, and try to learn as much as possible about past cultures. Big Thunder's quote is also an excellent example of the continuous cycle that we have described in the circle.

Big Thunder's quote frequently appears in books devoted to Native American spirituality or quotes. It may be found on numerous Internet sites, for example [Ani Wa Ya, Earth Healing Prayers](#). For a photograph of Big Thunder, see the [University of Maine Hudson Museum](#). An excellent historical article on Big Thunder is "Chief Big Thunder (1827-1906): The Life History of a Penobscot Trickster", by Harald E.L. Prins, *Maine History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 1998, pp. 140-158.

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State Route 1 Artifacts:

Five projectile points, or as they are commonly called, "arrowheads" and "spear points", are depicted in the poster. To Native Americans, rocks are symbols of Mother Earth, and signs of everlasting and indestructible forces. Stone artifacts, in fact, are the most frequently recovered

objects from archaeological sites.

The projectile points displayed on the poster were recovered during recent excavations in advance of construction of the State Route 1 road corridor. The points were from the [Smyrna to Pine Tree Corners](#) road segment in New Castle County, and the [Puncheon Run Connector](#) road corridor in Dover, Kent County.

The points generally fall into common styles which range from time periods referred to as Early and Middle Woodland, or from 3,000 to 1,000 years ago (1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.). The points were fashioned from chert and quartz materials, which naturally occur as cobbles and pebbles in streams. Native Americans procured these natural gravels and skillfully chipped them into a variety of stone tools.

- The black and white points are from the Frederick Lodge site, in New Castle County. The Frederick Lodge site was a vast 30-acre site, and among its hallmarks was the excavation of an occupation dating to about 8,000 B.C., a period that is not well-known in Delaware history.
- The tan point, which is repeated several times, is from the Sandom Branch site, in New Castle County. The Sandom Branch site was a well-preserved site which contained a number of hearths, stone tools, and pottery dating to the Late Woodland, or from about 1,000 to 500 years ago.
- The red and yellow points are from the [Hickory Bluff site](#), in Kent County, on the south edge of Dover. Large-scale excavations were conducted at the Hickory Bluff site. The site is considered one of the most impressive site excavations in Delaware. The site contained numerous pit and hearth features and over 85,000 stone tools and pottery.

These artifacts, and the results of the State Route 1 site excavations, will be published in the **Delaware Department of Transportation Archaeology Series**. The series is found in many community libraries throughout the state.

For further information on the [different periods of Native American archaeology](#) and on the [projectile point types](#) that may be found in Delaware, see "A Guide to Prehistoric Arrowheads and Spear Points of Delaware", by Jay Custer, 1996. (Find ordering information for the printed guide [here](#).)

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POSTER SPONSORS

A number of organizations—a professional and amateur society, two state agencies, and six Cultural Resource Management firms--contributed to the financial support of this poster. Archaeological fieldwork, laboratory work, and research are on-going in the state of Delaware. Many archaeological projects are conducted under the umbrella of "Cultural Resource Management", which has a goal to identify, evaluate, and excavate sites prior to construction activities.

The 2001 Delaware Archaeology Month Committee thanks all of these organizations for their generous support.

The archaeological activities of these organizations may be found on their respective web sites.

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POSTER DESIGN CREDITS

The poster design was created by members of the Cultural Resource Management Department at [Parsons Engineering Science, Inc.](#). Volunteers included Elizabeth Crowell, Phenix Hall, Susan Hathaway, Dennis Knepper, Randall Patrick, Michael Petraglia, and Carter Shields. For further information on the poster design or its contents, contact [Michael Petraglia](#), 703-218-1084.


The 2001 Delaware Archaeology Month Committee thanks Parsons Engineering Science, Inc., and all its hardworking volunteers for this creative, thoughtful design.

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Delaware Archaeology Month 2004 is partially funded by a grant from the Delaware Humanities Forum, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and sponsored by a committee of the Archaeological Society of Delaware, partnered with professional and avocational archaeologists living and/or working in Delaware, and concerned about preserving Delaware's rich heritage of archaeological sites. Contact [Cherie Dodge](#), 302-739-5685, for further information.

The committee includes members from the [Archaeological Society of Delaware](#), [City of Wilmington Department of Planning](#), [Delaware Department of Transportation](#), [Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), [Delaware State Parks](#), [Delaware State Historic Preservation Office](#), [Delaware State Museums](#), [GAI Consultants, Inc.](#), [Gannett Fleming, Inc.](#), [Greenbank Mill Associates, Inc.](#), [Hunter Research, Inc.](#), [Iron Hill Museum](#) of the Delaware Academy of Science, [John Milner Associates, Inc.](#), [MAAR Associates, Inc.](#), [McCormick, Taylor and Associates, Inc.](#), [Preservation Delaware, Inc.](#), [The Louis Berger Group, Inc.](#), [Thunderbird Archeological Associates, Inc.](#), [University of Delaware Department of Anthropology](#), and [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#). This celebration of the past would not be possible without the generous participation of the speakers, festival volunteers, and sponsors.

This site is maintained by the [Delaware State Historic Preservation Office](#). Contact [Mary Harper](#) if you have comments, additions, or corrections for this site.
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The Earth is our Mother... That which We put into the Ground, She returns to Us... The Earth is our Mother... That which We put into the Ground, She returns to Us...

EXPLORING DELAWARE'S PAST

DELAWARE ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH

MAY 2001

For more information call (302) 739-5314 www.delawarearchaeology.org

Quote Attribution: Chief Big Thunder, 19th c. Algonquian

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